

## 6/7/17 HB4105 and HB4334 Testimony of Lori Watanabe Saginaw

My name is Lori Watanabe Saginaw and I appreciate the chance share the experience of my mother, May Watanabe, that I feel is relevant to the fears I have about HB4105 and HB4334.

My mother and I are Michigan residents—for 48 years in my case and 15 years in hers. Even at age 95, she carries a profound wound from experiencing U. S. government-sanctioned racial and ethnic profiling as a young woman and the subsequent imprisonment of herself and her family without due process. It was all deemed legal at the time. Please consider her lived experience as the proof that this *has* happened and *can* happen again.

I am a third generation Japanese American. My mother was born in California so she is an American. Her parents were Japanese immigrants who came to this country at a time of high, anti-Asian sentiment, e.g. laws restricting the entry of Asians, quotas, and laws preventing access to citizenship.

My mother was a student when Pearl Harbor was attacked and immediately became a “potential enemy” of the United States. She was forced to leave college; her parents were ordered to abandon their home and business. They were among the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans who lost their assets and community ties when they were rounded up, put on trains and held in army prison camps. They were guilty of nothing other than their appearance and their ethnicity. Yet our government never found one instance of espionage or threat from those imprisoned. Now our government admits regret for its action but the damage and residue of the trauma remains.

My mother and I reacted viscerally at reading the content and knowing the foreseeable ramifications of these two bills. Our response is shaped by trepidation and old memories of being a targeted group, being terrorized by citizenry and the government. It underscores the reality that *law* does not always translate into *right, just, safer, in our best interest or for the greater good*.

I entreat you to NOT recreate this dark chapter. Do NOT propel Michigan in that direction. My family's experience informs me that these bills have the potential to create a toxic climate of fear, divisiveness and hostility reminiscent of exactly what enveloped my mother 75 years ago.

Consider the mistake made by our government. These bills will foster paralyzing fear and handicap systems of law and safety already working at the expense of economic productivity and social stability. Don't put Michigan on the wrong side of history. Please be responsible architects of our future and our state.

Thank you.